

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 SS-15 NSC-10 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 L-03 CU-04 AID-20 SY-10 NIC-01 OPR-02 RSR-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 /108 W

----- 012129

O 231420 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9970

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

USCINCSO

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USCINCSO FOR POLAD

BRASILIA FOR ASST. SEC. KUBISCH

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINS, BL

SUBJ: SELICH AFFAIR

1. ARCHBISHOP MANRIQUE ISSUED A STATEMENT REFUSING THE GOVERNMENT' S INVITATION TO SERVE ON THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE SELICH DEATH. IN HIS STATEMENT MANRIQUE STATED THAT ALTHOUGH THE CHURCH RECOGNIZES THE NEED FOR SUCH A COMMISSION, IT WOULD BE AGAINST ECCLESIASTICAL NORMS FOR THE CHURCH TO SERVE ON IT. MANRIQUE' S STATEMENT RINGS A LITTLE HOLLOW AND SUGGESTS A LACK OF INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE CHURCH IN HELPING THE GOVERNMENT WITH ITS PROBLEMS AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME,
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IN VIEW OF MANRIQUE' S WILLINGNESS IN PAST YEARS TO SERVE, AS DID OTHER CHURCH OFFICIALS, ON COMMISSIONS APPOINTED BY OVANDO AND TORRES WORKING ON STUDENT PROBLEMS AND THE TEOPONTE GUERRILLA CAMPAIGN.

2. TO DATE THERE HAVE BEEN NO PUBLIC REACTIONS FROM THE OTHER CIVIC LEADERS INVITED TO SERVE ON THE PRESIDENT' S COMMISSION.

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SOME DISCONTENT CONTINUES WITHIN THE POLICE AS A RESULT OF ARCE' S AND CABALLERO' S REMOVAL COMPOUNDED BY FEAR WITHIN THE POLICE THAT THE PROFESSIONAL POLICE CORPS WILL TAKE THE FULL BLAME FOR SELICH' S DEATH; A BLAME THE POLICEMEN DO NOT BELIEVE THEY DESERVE. THIS DISCONTENT APPARENTLY HAS BEEN EXPLOITED BY CABALLERO WHO RESISTED HIS REMOVAL AND WHO REPORTEDLY IS AGITATING AMONG THE POLICE. KEY POLICE OFFICIALS ARE SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH BANZER TODAY OR TOMORROW TO DISCUSS THE MATTER, AND THEY EXPECT BANZER TO GIVE APPROPRIATE REASSURANCES AND POSSIBLY EVEN PROMISE THAT COL. TEJERINO WILL BE REPLACED IN THE NEAR FUTURE BY A PROFESSIONAL CAREER POLICEMAN AS NATIONAL CHIEF OF POLICE.

4. COMMENT: POLICE AGITATION ASIDE, WHICH IS RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT WHEN COMPARED WITH EVENTS OF THE LAST WEEK, TENSIONS HAVE DECREASED WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS MAY BE OVER. ON THE OTHER HAND, RUMORS ARE RIFE TENDING TO IMPLICATE THE MNR AND PAZ ESTENSSORO DIRECTLY IN SELICH' S DEATH. WE THEREFORE CANNOT DISCOUNT THAT SOME OVERT EFFORT MAY YET BE MADE, CAPITALIZATING ON THE EMOTIONALISM AND MILITARY CAMARADERIE SURROUNDING SELICH' S DEATH, TO UPSET THE FPN WITH TARGETS BEING PAZ OR BANZER OR BOTH. SIRACUSA

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